

Mr. Speaker, listening to the previous speakers, I knew General Doolittle. He wasn't an ace, but he should have been.

I would like to start by thanking my friend and colleague from Washington State (Mr. HECK) for his leadership on this bill. I also want to thank Chairman HENSARLING of the Financial Services Committee and the House leadership for bringing H.R. 685, the American Fighter Aces Congressional Gold Medal Act, to the floor.

This bill, which already has the support of 312 Members of this body, honors an elite group of American fighter pilots known as fighter aces with Congress' highest recognition, the Congressional Gold Medal.

Additionally, I want to thank the American Fighter Aces Association, specifically Mr. Gregg Wagner, for his advocacy and for the association's efforts in recognizing this influential group of American fighter pilots.

Aces are U.S. fighter pilots credited with destroying five or more confirmed enemy aircraft in aerial combat. More than 60,000 U.S. military fighter pilots have taken to the air. However, less than 1,500 have been honored with the coveted status of fighter ace.

During my 29 years of service in the U.S. Air Force I was credited with one confirmed MiG kill, one probable, and one damaged. I personally am not an ace, Mr. Speaker. However, having personally met and flown with some of those guys, I can speak to the sacrifice, risk, and contribution these fighter pilots make in protecting our freedoms.

Allow me to share a little bit about the lives of two aces whom I personally knew. One is an American hero, dear friend, and fellow POW we lost last year, Brigadier General Robbie Risner.

Robbie flew more than 100 combat missions over North Korea and became the 20th fighter ace of the Korean war. He shot down eight Russian-built MiGs and received the Silver Star for a life-threatening midair maneuver to steer a fellow pilot to safety.

During the Vietnam war, he led the first flight of Operation Rolling Thunder, a high-intensity aerial bombing of North Vietnam, for which he received the Air Force Cross and was featured on the cover of Time magazine for his bravery, valor, and accomplishments.

The other is an American patriot and good friend who went home to meet our Lord and Savior in 2009, Colonel Hal Fischer.

Hal served in the military for 30 years and also became an ace during the Korean war, with 10 confirmed aerial victories. I was in that same wing.

While rising through the ranks to colonel, he flew 200 missions in Vietnam and 175 missions in Korea. On April 7, 1953, he entered into a fierce dogfight with North Korean MiG-15s near the Yalu River, where his F-86 Sabre jet was shot down.

Forced to eject, Fischer parachuted into enemy territory and was quickly taken by Chinese soldiers as a prisoner

of war. After being tortured and kept in dark, damp cells with no bed for 2 years, he was released and returned to Active Duty 2 months later.

This is just a glimpse into the lives and heroic acts fighter aces performed during every mission. American fighter aces have led distinguished careers in the military, education, private enterprise, and politics. This elite group has carried out their duties with honor, integrity, dignity and respect.

They are the best of the best, the cream of the crop in air-to-air combat. They have engaged the enemy time and time again over the South Pacific, Europe, and East Asia—and won. They contributed to the aerial supremacy of the United States. They have shortened wars and saved lives. Yet they have never been rightfully honored—at least not until now. I am honored to say that today we have an opportunity to change that.

Today is the day these American patriots will receive a special homage, the highest possible honor Congress can bestow: the Congressional Gold Medal.

Sadly, of the 1,500 U.S. fighter aces this bill recognizes, only a few hundred remain with us today. While we have lost many American fighter aces, this Gold Medal is an important step in honoring and remembering their exemplary service to our country.

As we ponder the blessings of service and sacrifice of those who wear the uniform, especially with Memorial Day just around the corner, we can only humbly acknowledge that we are the land of the free because of the brave. These men are shining examples of everything great that America stands for.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a more appropriate way to honor the heroism, duty, service, courage, and sacrifice of American fighter aces than in the week before Memorial Day. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor that Congress can bestow, and I can think of no group more deserving than this elite group of fighter pilots. I thank you for joining me in that effort.

I urge all my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join all my colleagues in thanking our colleague from Texas for underscoring this important legislation and for his service.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 685, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 2203, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 685, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

## AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO JACK NICKLAUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2203) to provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Jack Nicklaus, in recognition of his service to the Nation in promoting excellence, good sportsmanship, and philanthropy, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 371, nays 10, not voting 50, as follows:

[Roll No. 218]

YEAS—371

Aderholt	Blumenauer	Carson (IN)
Amodei	Bonamici	Carter
Bachmann	Boustany	Cartwright
Bachus	Brady (PA)	Castor (FL)
Barber	Braley (IA)	Castro (TX)
Barletta	Brooks (AL)	Chabot
Barr	Brooks (IN)	Chu
Barrow (GA)	Brown (FL)	Cicilline
Barton	Brownley (CA)	Clarke (NY)
Bass	Buchanan	Clay
Beatty	Bucshon	Cleaver
Becerra	Burgess	Clyburn
Benishek	Bustos	Coble
Bentivolio	Butterfield	Coffman
Bera (CA)	Byrne	Cohen
Billirakis	Camp	Collins (GA)
Bishop (GA)	Campbell	Collins (NY)
Bishop (NY)	Capps	Conaway
Bishop (UT)	Capuano	Connolly
Black	Cardenas	Conyers
Blackburn	Carney	Cook